Name:

*Mr. Tiénou-Gustafson, Mr. Bielmeier*

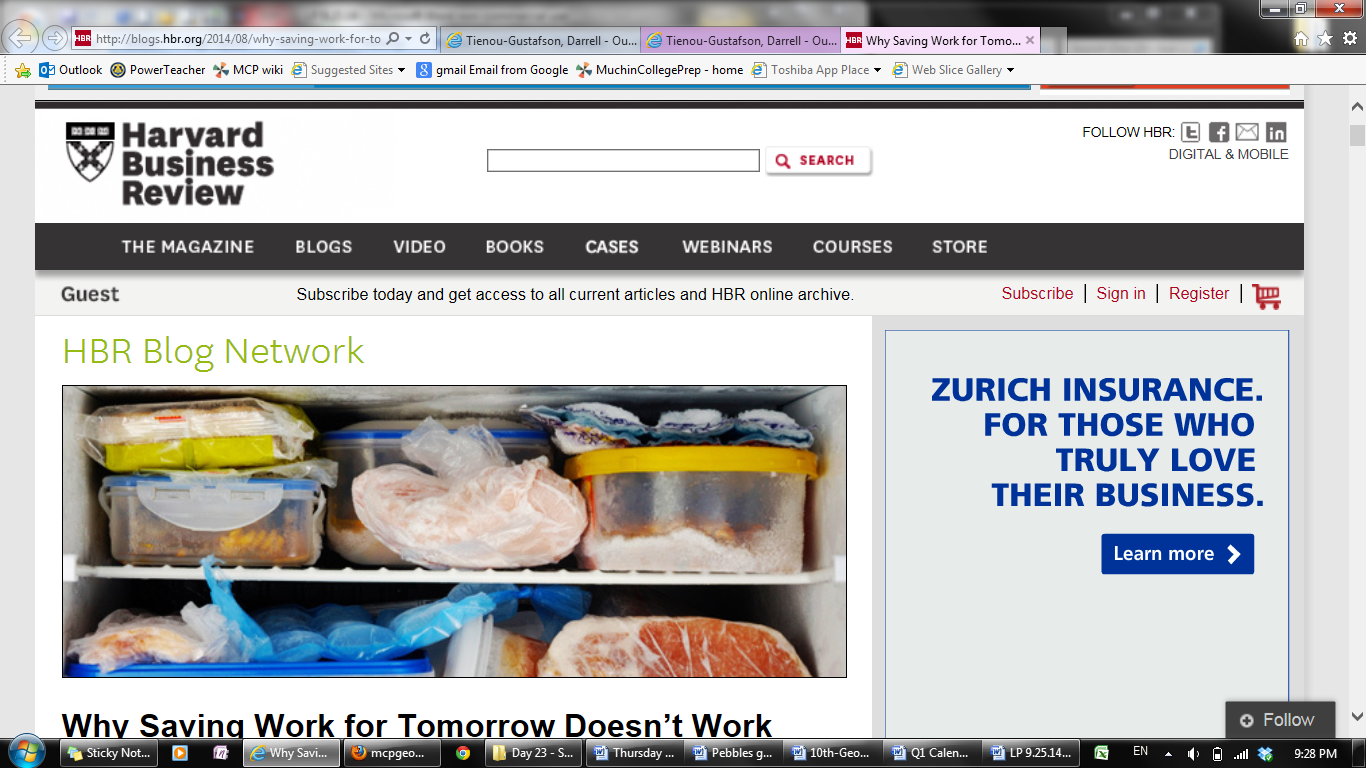
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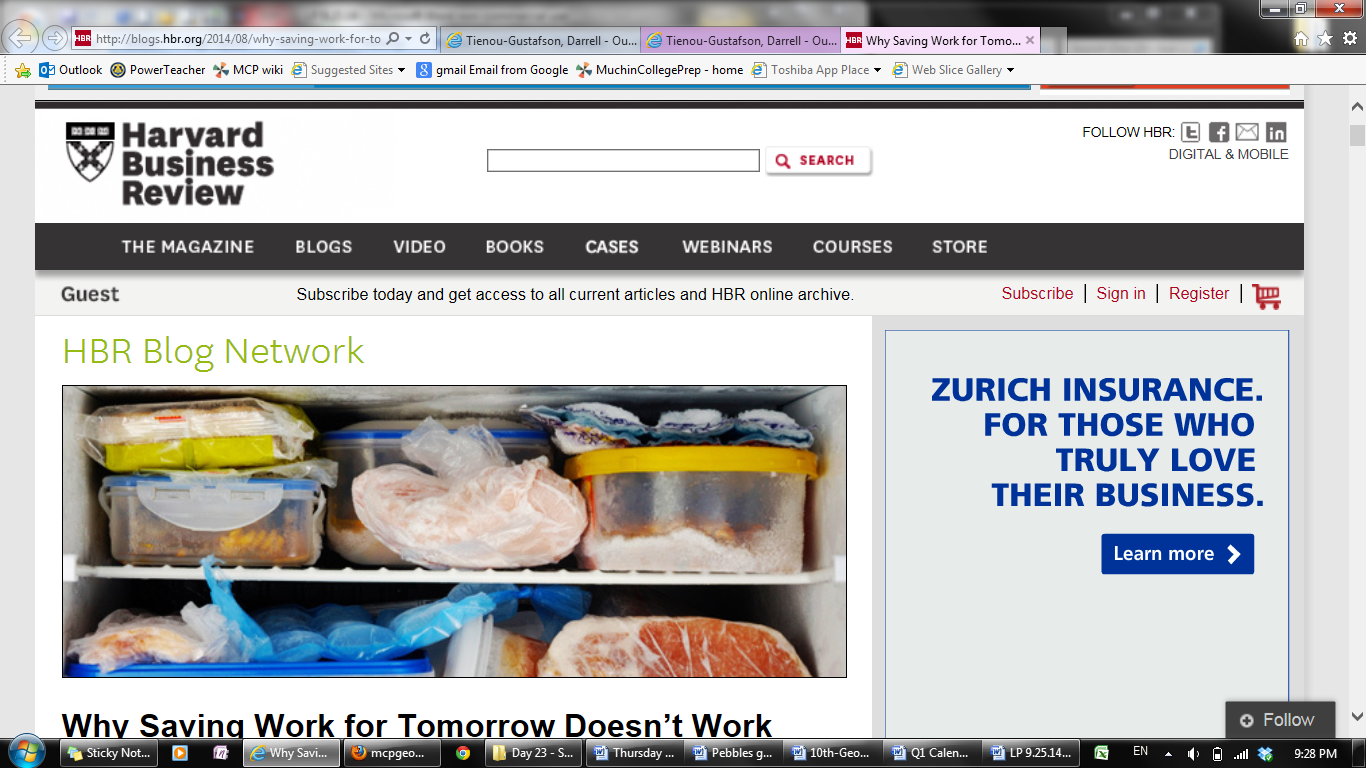
Due Date: Mon, 29 Sep 2014

**Geometry**

**Homework**







**Why Saving Work for Tomorrow Doesn’t Work**

by Elizabeth Grace Saunders  |   8:00 AM August 25, 2014

Do you frequently tell yourself that you’ll do better “next time” and then don’t change when the time comes? Do you often decide to do something “later” only to find that it never gets done?

If you answered “yes” to either one of these questions, you’re probably ignoring the fact that your behavior today is a strong indicator of your behavior tomorrow.

You’re not alone. In [***The Willpower Instinct***](http://www.amazon.com/Willpower-Instinct-Self-Control-Works-Matters/dp/1583335080/), Kelly McGonigal shares how, [**in a research study**](https://faculty-gsb.stanford.edu/khan/documents/effectoffuturechoices.pdf), participants were much less likely to exert willpower in making healthy choices when they thought they would have another opportunity the following week. Given the option of a fat-free yogurt versus a Mrs. Field’s cookie, 83% of those who thought they’d have another opportunity the following week chose the cookie. In addition, 67% thought they would pick yogurt the next time, but only 36% made a different choice. Meanwhile, only 57% of the people who saw this as their only chance indulged.

The same pattern of overoptimism about the future held true in a study about people predicting how much they would exercise in the future. When asked to predict their exercise realistically — and even faced with cold, hard data about their previous exercise patterns — individuals were still overly optimistic that “tomorrow would be different.”

Eating and exercise habits are all well and good, but as an expert in effective time investment, I’ve seen too many individuals procrastinate at work because they think, “I’ll get a lot done later.” Unfortunately, banking on future time rarely aligns with productive results. This mindset leads to unconscious self-sabotage because individuals are not taking advantage of the opportunity to get tasks done right now, and when later comes, they find themselves feeling guilty, burned out, and frustrated. They fall back on their habits to put work off, and it doesn’t get accomplished.

This pattern of behavior appears on the job when the only thing you accomplish during the day is answering email because you assume you’ll work better later when no one else is the office. But after everyone’s left at the end of the day, you’re too tired to think straight and just go home without getting anything done. Or it shows up when you choose to not make any progress on a project in small windows of time available because you’re waiting for an open day to knock it out all at once. That day never comes, leaving you scrambling at the last minute. Or it can spring up when you say “yes” to every meeting invite and leave no time to do actual work. Then you wonder why you feel like you’re always frantically working and never have time to relax.

Unless you make a conscious effort to change your behavior, poor time management today will only lead to poor time management tomorrow. Consider these two approaches to dramatically increase your productivity.

**Eliminate future options**. If you have a tendency, like many overwhelmed individuals, to tell yourself that that you’ll get your important work done later — maybe at night or on the weekend — you increase your chance of procrastination during the day. In truth, you can find it difficult to efficiently get things done later because you feel tired and resentful of the fact that you never have any guilt-free downtime. To overcome this psychological loophole, you need to eliminate the option to do something later.

First, challenge yourself to find specified times during your workday to complete your commitments. Look at your project list and estimate approximately how long it will take you to get certain items done. For example, if you have a presentation at the end of the month, determine how long it will take you to gather the information, put together the presentation, review it with your team, and run through it. Then assign specific times in your schedule between now and the presentation for you to complete each piece. This approach of fusing your to-do list with your calendar will help you realize that if you don’t move ahead on key projects, you will run out of time. There’s no option to simply do the work tomorrow because tomorrow has a new set of tasks assigned to it.

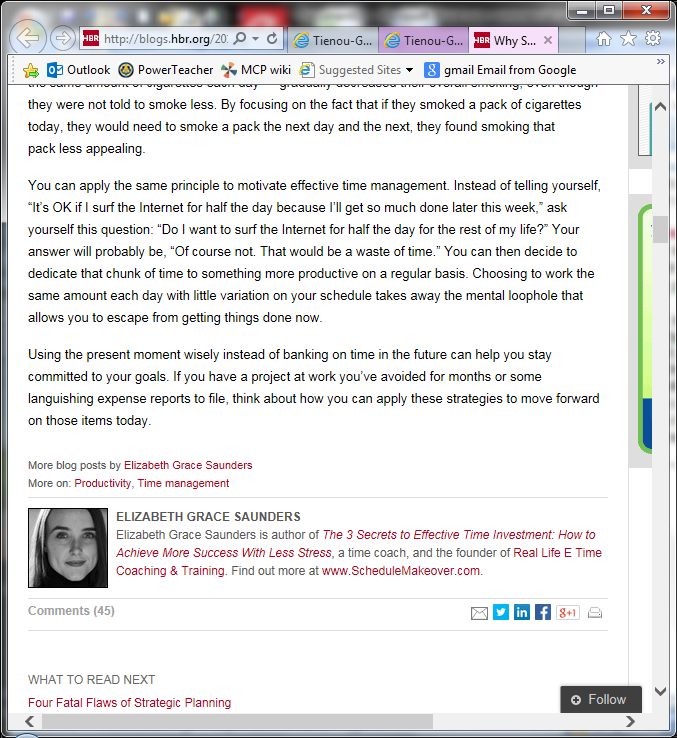
In addition, eliminate free time after hours. If you see an open window on your calendar, you’ll be tempted to put off work, knowing there’s an opportunity later — even if that cuts into personal time. Instead, fill that time with personal commitments. This could mean going out to dinner with a friend, spending the evening at your kids’ soccer game, going to the gym, or moving ahead a side project. By determining what you want to do outside of the office, you motivate yourself to make the best use of your time during the day so that you don’t need to cancel your evening commitments.

**Reduce variability in your schedule.** If you justify surfing the Internet most of the day because you tell yourself that you’ll work nonstop later, you’re setting yourself up for frustration. When you do attempt to tackle that work, you’ll either feel so guilty about your lack of productivity that it will distract you from the task at hand, or you’ll push yourself so hard that you’ll burn out.

Fortunately, there’s a way to outsmart your mental tricks. Studies done by [**behavioral economist Howard Rachlin**](http://www.amazon.com/The-Science-Self-Control-Howard-Rachlin/dp/0674013573/)show that smokers told to reduce variability in their smoking behavior — to smoke the same amount of cigarettes each day — gradually decreased their overall smoking, even though they were not told to smoke less. By focusing on the fact that if they smoked a pack of cigarettes today, they would need to smoke a pack the next day and the next, they found smoking that pack less appealing.

You can apply the same principle to motivate effective time management. Instead of telling yourself, “It’s OK if I surf the Internet for half the day because I’ll get so much done later this week,” ask yourself this question: “Do I want to surf the Internet for half the day for the rest of my life?” Your answer will probably be, “Of course not. That would be a waste of time.” You can then decide to dedicate that chunk of time to something more productive on a regular basis. Choosing to work the same amount each day with little variation on your schedule takes away the mental loophole that allows you to escape from getting things done now.

Using the present moment wisely instead of banking on time in the future can help you stay committed to your goals. If you have a project at work you’ve avoided for months or some languishing expense reports to file, think about how you can apply these strategies to move forward on those items today.



***Comprehension Questions***

***~ Respond on looseleaf.***

1. How many more people choose an unhealthy option   
   (a cookie instead of yogurt) when they think they’ll have another chance later? Why do you think this is?
2. What is something in your life that you procrastinate in? Why do you think you put it off?
3. From past experience, how likely are you to do what you told yourself you would do “later” when it involves something you don’t enjoy doing?
4. What is something that you should do now instead of procrastinating or “saving it for later”? How can you hold yourself responsible for doing it, or who can help you?
5. If ***p*** represents the number of total people polled who ate a cookie, thought they would take a healthier choice next time, and actually did. If 200 cookie-eating people are surveyed, how many more people will eat a cookie than yogurt the next time?
6. If you knew that you would do the same thing tomorrow as today (or next weekend as opposed to this weekend), would you change anything you do now? Why or why not?
7. This article was written for working adult professionals. Do you think it applies equally to teenagers?   
   Why or why not?